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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 002343

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREF](#) [PARM](#) [KJUS](#) [UNSC](#) [UNGA](#) [ASEAN](#)
TH, CB

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR AND THAI FM TEJ DISCUSS POTUS VISIT,
PREAH VIHEAR, PSI, LAO HMONG, AND OTHER ISSUES

REF: A. BANGKOK 2294 (MFA ON TEMPLE TALKS)
[1](#)B. BANGKOK 2276 (TEJ APPOINTED)
[1](#)C. STATE 79734 (PROTECTING LAO HMONG)
[1](#)D. STATE 72078 (63RD UNGA)

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Classified By: Ambassador Eric G. John, reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) The Ambassador and newly-appointed Foreign Minister Tej Bunnag agreed in a July 31 courtesy call that all arrangements were proceeding smoothly for the upcoming visit to Thailand of President Bush. Tej expressed appreciation for USG assistance in preventing the UN Security Council from formally considering Thai-Cambodian tension over the Preah Vihear temple. He said the RTG hoped to ensure quick Thai ratification of the ASEAN Charter. Tej took on board points the Ambassador made on Lao Hmong, PSI, and the Viktor Bout extradition case. Tej confirmed he and Prime Minister Samak would travel to New York for the upcoming UNGA. End Summary.

POTUS VISIT

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador on July 31 paid a courtesy call on newly-appointed Foreign Minister Tej Bunnag. The Ambassador and Tej agreed that arrangements for the upcoming visit of President Bush were proceeding smoothly. The Ambassador expressed regret that it had proven logistically impossible to arrange an audience with King Bhumibol during the upcoming visit.

PREAH VIHEAR

[1](#)3. (C) Tej explained how, on hearing of his impending appointment as Foreign Minister, he rushed home from overseas and hurried to prepare for talks with his Cambodian counterpart on the situation in the vicinity of the Preah Vihear temple. He thanked the Ambassador for USG assistance in preventing this situation from coming formally before the

UN Security Council.

ASEAN

¶4. (C) The Ambassador asked Tej's plans for Thailand's term as ASEAN Chair. Tej said the government would seek Thailand's parliamentary ratification of the ASEAN Charter as soon as possible. He did not indicate he was aware of any specific objections legislators might have to the Charter, but he quipped that "everything is a political problem now." He looked forward to the Charter coming into force, noting that this would help to put ASEAN "firmly on the world map." He predicted ASEAN would move toward integration in a fashion similar to Europe's. The Ambassador stressed USG support for ASEAN, highlighting for Tej the recent appointment of EAP DAS Marciel as Ambassador for ASEAN Affairs.

PSI

¶5. (C) The Ambassador raised the Proliferation Security Initiative, urging that the Thais participate as soon as their political situation might allow. Tej acknowledged the Ambassador with a nod but offered no verbal reply.

BOUT EXTRADITION

¶6. (C) The Ambassador thanked Tej for the RTG's assistance in the arrest of Russian arms trafficker Viktor Bout, emphasizing that this case remained important at the highest levels of the U.S. Government. The Ambassador explained that the Embassy was tracking the case as it moved through

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Thailand's courts. Tej acknowledged the USG's interest.

LAO HMONG

¶7. (C) Conveying ref C's points, the Ambassador emphasized USG concern over the disposition of Lao Hmong in Thailand and the need for a transparent screening process that meets international standards. The Ambassador explained that the USG would work with the Thais on resettlement abroad of Lao Hmong who merit refugee status. Tej said the USG and RTG had worked together on refugee matters for more than three decades, and the USG would receive good cooperation from all concerned RTG agencies.

UNGA PLANS

¶8. (U) Tej confirmed that he, Prime Minister Samak, and advisor Manaspas Xuto would travel to New York for the upcoming UNGA. Samak would arrive in the U.S. following a visit to Europe. Tej indicated the MFA had not yet been able to finalize its UNGA preparations. (Post will continue to seek information on the Thai UNGA delegation, per ref D instructions.)

COMMENT

¶9. (C) An experienced diplomat, Tej appears to be well suited for the role of Foreign Minister and someone with whom we can work easily. He related to the Ambassador that his parents had first met in Washington, D.C., and he said that, consequently, he considered himself "very attached sentimentally" to the United States, and particularly to Washington.

JOHN